1/27/72

Dear Howard,

From the moment i heard of nixon's budget message i got others of it own. probably if i could have used both hand i would have done with that one thing something like what you saw on the gulf of tonkin notes. when this was delayed and other things of what to me were of a consistent nature, in t at terrible coldness of the secret v.n. papers called other signals. then the blood in the old fire horse started coursing, but the door didn't open, closed by a thumb! then i thought well, howard has my old v.n. papers and, whether or not at the time it is possible, i would like him to do his thesis on some aspect that will never be covered adequately, so do a few notes analyzing what this may portend for him, at that,too, i could not get to. so i have in mind a variant. i began it was a windup as unsubtle as victor laski's.

unless colleges have changed much, they teach facts not analysis. why not do more than you have by way of analysis, thinking in odd times, like walking from class to class? see how much of what happens in the world you can come to anticipate in one way or another. i think that if you cannot, with the fine equipment with which you begin, hit it right on the button, if you practise this you will find that you will, pretty consistently, be in the court. and one of the by-products as you increase in age will be a kind on instinctive or spontaneous analysis that, with practise, will grow more dependable because of the understanding you will come to acquire, something you will not need to go to books for and cannot get there until after the facts.

if you would like to formalize this more, begin with the budget message, ask yourself is this a signal and if it is, of what and, in the very special context it has, if you see one, what is its very special signal. now you can look back, and because you keep more current with developments than most, ask yourself was it followed by another. i think it was and avoid telling you what i think it is so you will think independently. it was not necessary but adds dimension, as i see it. from the budget message alone i expected much of what has since happened. the one thing i did not expect has a number of parts. i had no inkling of the secret "negotiations", nor did i anticipate that nixon would go on tv (perhsps because i did not stop to think it through, for with him it should have been more obvious than with any other). and i would not have dreamed that he would commit so flagrant a breach of practise in disclosing the secrets of another country.

if this exercise interests you and if you have the time, i may not be able to take the time to punch a critique out letter as a time like this, but i can talk it into a tape recorder for you. i think one of the results can be an interesting chapter of a book or thesis years hence in which you can show how easy it was to see ahead and to understand part of the future before it came.

while what can fairly be called maturity came earlier with you, you still have accumulated only 18 years, and only a small percentage of the part that can be called of maturity can have been devoted to the past in a way that could provide you with some of the raw material that should be helpful. i therefore take a liberty on inflict view that you can accept or reject. it is far from enough to understand tha nixon is dirty or tricky. you have to understand the man better and how he goes with the forces around him. he is one of the least imaginative, most stereotyped of men, and i think gloria steinem did more than pull a good line. he is an improviser, a copier. in fact, he still tries to copy some of john kennedy's special rhetoric. but he is more -or worse -than sick and crooked. i can recall no man ever in our public life as completely without scruple or principle. this is his greatest and close to only political asset. it is the one thing that made it possible for him to be president. his character is not flawed by a single asset of decency. in his first campaign for office he did as dirty a thing as has even been done, calling a concerned liberal woman a little ahead og her new-deal time, melvyn douglas' wife helen gahagan a communist for espousing things we have long since passed in considering them the rights of all or the needs of the country. his un-american committee and what he did on and with it are not new. it was merely the repetition of what was proceeded by martin dies who, in turn, copied from mccormack, the recent majority leader, and his associate, a congressman dicksteib. it is dies who took the step away from the past, who abandoned the exposure

of nazis and such, including the native fascists, like the klan. i planned a book on dies and had it researched when the time of first the war and then the hollywood ten came. one night a former associate brought one of the ten to my hom to borrow some of my files for their defense. i never got a single page of them back. between then and what + lonzo the lawyers for trade-union leaders for the defense of their clients, i never got anything back and the research was gitted. but nixon added nothing, he repeated, only with al little concern for anything but his own advancement as man can have.

when he was a senator and running for v.p., he was caught in criminality, plain graft, taking money illegally. ike almost went crazy in this incredible and cheap stupidity, something that had no precedent in a presidential campaign. but nixon rose to the occasion with his infamous checkers speech, i think cooker up bt p.r. man murray chotiner and became the first man to hide behind the fuzz of a very small dog. it worked, and you can be sure he learned. it would have ruined any man who had any human attribute other than approximate form. and during this time he was capable of saying anything about anything. should you ever be interested in this aspect, a former friend of mine who in a slightly earlier (radio) day had been a top cbs correspondent, wrote a book on it. i have forgotten the title. he is bill costello.

when nixon was vice pres. i was farming. one of my customers ran a committee for him. he got a dozen of my very fanciest birds as a gift for nixon. now they were unusual enough for mamie eisenhower to go down to the dulles (john) kitchen and ask bertha the cook where she got such marvelous fowl, for one example. but not enough for dick or his wife ever to say thanks or ever to have one of the multitudinous secretaries to tyoe a short note. he is that kind of inhuman. when he ran for v.p. an old friend of lil' who i also knew, then not in need and having retired from having been secretary to hiram johnson, a calif. republican (and cinservative) senator, was talked into taking this job with nixon for the campaign. it was her devotion to the party that persuaded her. she even then so hated nixon that she made it clear it would be for the campaign only and absolutely refused to enjoy a bite of the fruit of success. does this give you an idea of the intensity of dislike he can inspire within his own political circles among the few who are decent?

i have to stop now to get on with the day's needs, I've gotten lil up, etc.

but i take time for what i think you will understand is neither a lecture nor a boast. i think you may have heard me say that what i have been able to do that others have not is not so much a credit to me as it is a measure of the deficiencies of others. i do not use this as a false modesty. take it seriously, literally. take the most recent example, being the only one who foresaw the current problem with the kennedy material. learning that cyril had applied merely frightened me because he had not told me an it had worse potential with him. i had anticipated this much earlier and sent him a subtle safe proposal to which he had not-and to this day has not-responded. actually, i blunderer. i should not have forgotten, and i did. if i had not, i might have, by persistence, have arranged a better situation than we now have. my point here is that once your mind starts analytical functioning it enjoys it and does it often spontaneously. so, let it form the habit.

this is an exceptionally good year for such effort because of the problems and the personalities. I suggest that you include the democrats, and i give you one clue, in my view, from what i have seen on tv, not one of the candidates made an adequate response. the closest thing to a good answer to nixon's v.n. speech was by teddy. if you see it this way, i think it gives you a good opportunity for an appraisal of the field and the future. i suggest you include the deal nixon was talking about. it was not in the early edition of yesterday's paper, too one we got, but what you should look for is what is not in it, and i am absolutely confident it is predictable, from the speech alone. he simply cannot have included it, for if he had meet the reasonable and minimum conditions of the other side it would be all over, and that, especially with the economic situation, he cannot survive. you will have to find a persistence in what he knows has to kill any chance of negotiating a settlement, and his is the continuing problem of having to make it seem that he is negotiating, whereas in reality he has to make it impossible. i think his improvisation on the prisoner issue is a major blunder. anyway, don't feel you have to. I think it would be good for you. best.

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